REMARKS

Reconsideration of this application and allowance of the claims is respectfully requested. Please charge Deposit Account No. 19-1351 for the extra claim filing fee of one added independent claim and a total of three added claims (large entity).

Support for the new language of claims 1, 9, and 23, is clearly seen in Figs. 1a, 2, 3, 4, 6a, and 7. In all of these drawings, the respective elastomeric walls have an outer face ". . . that is entirely exposed to the exterior . . . " Note also, in the specification, lines 1-3 of page 6, which speaks of the exposure of the outer face of the elastomeric wall. This is contrary to the embodiment of Fig. 5, which the claims of this application no longer cover, because a portion of the outer face of elastomeric wall 56 is in that embodiment covered by retention wall 60.

An advantage of the embodiments covered by the present claims of this application resides in the full exposure of the outer face of the retention wall, to the exterior, as indicated in the appropriate drawings. This provides excellent exposure of the outer face for lateral sweeping of an antiseptic-soaked pad or swab across its surface. The full, outer surface is exposed, providing less possibility that bacteria can reside in a crevice formed by an outer retainer which engages and pinches a peripheral portion of the outer face, as in Fig. 5, and as in the prior art.

The examiner has rejected claims 1-22 as unpatentable over the combination of Atkinson et al. U.S. Patent No. 5,501,426 in view of Jepson et al. U.S. Patent No. 5,188,620.

Atkinson '426 has been previously discussed in the amendment dated December 23, 2004. It is believed that the examiner agrees that Atkinson et al. '426

fails to disclose an elastomeric wall which is ". . . essentially free of longitudinally inwardly extending projections" as discussed in the amendment of December 23, 2004.

In response to this, the examiner adds to the rejection the Jepson et al. U.S. Patent No. 5,180,620, which shows a pre-slit injection site.

However, Jepson et al. clearly show an elastomeric wall which fails to exhibit "an outer face that is entirely exposed to the exterior . . ." There is a radially outer portion of the outer face, in the vicinity of reference numeral 52b, which is clearly covered by the housing of the injection site.

Furthermore, in neither Jepson et al. nor Atkinson et al. '426 is the elastomeric wall "laterally exposed to the exterior", as specifically called for in claims 2, 10, and 25. Examples of such an elastomeric wall which has a laterally exposed outer face can be seen in Figs. 2, 3, 4, and 7, where the elastomeric wall has a laterally exposed face and outer periphery such as 24a, in Fig. 2. As stated, the effective swabbing of the outer faces of elastomeric walls that are positioned in this manner is a very simple and easy thing, resulting in good antimicrobial effect on the outer face of the elastomeric wall, just prior to connection with a male luer connector or other projecting member.

Thus it is submitted that the claims of this application are clearly patentable over references cited by the examiner.

Respectfully submitted,

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I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the U.S. Postal Service as First Class Mail in an envelope addressed to: Mail Stop: EEE AMENDMENT, Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450 on May 23, 2005.

Registered Attorney for Applicant
Date: May 23, 2005